

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HALIFAX 0086

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

DEPT FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/ICI/PII, DSERCC, WHA/EX

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [CA](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: ANTI-WAR PROTESTS IN HALIFAX

1. SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. (SBU) AS REPORTED VIA E-MAILS OVER THE PAST WEEK, CONGEN HALIFAX HAS BEEN THE SITE OF THREE MAJOR (BY ATLANTIC CANADA STANDARDS) ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATIONS SINCE THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES IN IRAQ. ALL THREE PROTESTS---ORGANIZED BY A COMBINATION OF MILITANT STUDENT GROUPS, CHURCH GROUPS, AND THE SELF-STYLED "HALIFAX PEACE COALITION"---TOOK THE FORM OF MARCHES ACROSS TOWN, ENDING UP IN FRONT OF THE OFFICE BUILDING HOUSING THE CONGEN. ALL THREE TOOK PLACE WITHOUT VIOLENCE, ALTHOUGH DEMONSTRATORS ENGAGED IN STRONG ANTI-U.S. RHETORIC AND BURNED U.S. FLAGS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

3. (SBU) BOTH HALIFAX REGIONAL POLICE AND THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE (RCMP) TRACKED THE DEMONSTRATIONS CAREFULLY AND PROVIDED PROTECTION TO CONGEN OFFICES, PROVIDING 20-30 UNIFORMED POLICE OFFERS AT EACH EVENT. RCMP CONTACTS HAVE KEPT CG AND PSO INFORMED IN DETAIL OF THESE AND OTHER PLANNED PROTEST ACTIVITIES.

4. (SBU) THE FIRST DEMONSTRATION OCCURRED AT 1400 HOURS (LOCAL) ON THURSDAY, MARCH 20. APPROXIMATELY 100 PROTESTERS ARRIVED AT THE FRONT ENTRANCE TO THE OFFICE BUILDING (PURDYQS TOWER II) IN WHICH CONGEN HAS ITS NINTH-FLOOR OFFICES. THE DEMONSTRATORS CHANTED, PLAYED DRUMS, AND SOUNDED AIR HORNS FOR ABOUT 25 MINUTES BEFORE DEPARTING. THE PROTESTERS ALSO THREW BAGS OF WATER-SOLUBLE PAINT AT THE FRONT ENTRANCE AREA AND DREW FIGURES AND GRAFFITI ON THE STREET WITH CHALK. BUILDING MAINTENANCE QUICKLY CLEANED THE AREA.

5. (SBU) THE SECOND DEMONSTRATION OCCURRED LATER THE SAME DAY AT 1755 HOURS. MORE THAN 600 PROTESTERS ARRIVED AS A GROUP AT THE FRONT ENTRANCE TO PURDYQS TOWER II. THE DEMONSTRATION LASTED ABOUT ONE HOUR AND FEATURED SEVERAL SPEAKERS. THE CROWD WAS WELL BEHAVED AND DEPARTED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SPEECHES.

6. (SBU) THE THIRD DEMONSTRATION TOOK PLACE ON SATURDAY, MARCH 22. PROTESTERS ARRIVED WITH POLICE ESCORT AT THE FRONT OF PURDYQS TOWER II AT ABOUT 1400 HOURS. PROTESTERS ORGANIZED BY THE "HALIFAX PEACE COALITION" MARCHED ACROSS TOWN CARRYING IRAQI FLAGS, ANTIWAR BANNERS, AND ANTI-U.S. PLACARDS. SEVERAL DEMONSTRATORS BURNED A LARGE U.S. FLAG WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN FRONT OF THE CONSULATE. STUDENT LEADERS, CHURCH LEADERS, AND MEMBERS OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY DELIVERED SPEECHES AND CHANTING SLOGANS EXCORIATING THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, IN SOME CASES USING FAIRLY VIRULENT LANGUAGE. SEVERAL TV NEWS CREWS COVERED THE EVENT. MEDIA REPORTS DESCRIBED THE CROWD AS NUMBERING BETWEEN 1,000-2,000, BUT WE CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATE THE TOTAL NUMBER AT CLOSER TO 600-800.

7. (SBU) INDICATIONS OF A MAJOR ANTI-U.S. PROTEST AT THE CG RESIDENCE FORCED CONGEN HALIFAX TO CANCEL A LARGE RECEPTION WE WERE SCHEDULED TO HOLD THERE ON MARCH 25. POLICE AND UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS WARNED US THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT STUDENT GROUPS WERE ORGANIZING THEMSELVES TO CONDUCT A MAJOR PROTEST AT THE CG RESIDENCE TO DISRUPT OUR RECEPTION. SOME OF THE 30 LOCAL ART STUDENTS WHO WERE TO ATTEND THE RECEPTION AS GUESTS OF HONOR HAD BEEN THREATENED AND PRESSURED TO BOYCOTT THE RESIDENCE. ON THE ADVICE OF THE RCMP, WE POSTPONED THE EVENT.

COMMENT

8. (SBU) THESE DEMONSTRATIONS ARE SMALL COMPARED TO THOSE THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN LARGER CANADIAN CITIES SUCH AS TORONTO OR MONTREAL, BUT SIGNIFICANT BY HALIFAX STANDARDS. AS IS USUALLY THE CASE IN THE MARITIMES, THE PROTESTORS ARE CONDUCTING THEMSELVES IN A RESTRAINED, MOSTLY NON-VIOLENT MANNER. THE FACT THAT CONGEN HALIFAX IS LOCATED IN A LARGE OFFICE BUILDING (CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC ON WEEKENDS) WHICH ALSO HOUSES DOZENS OF OTHER COMPANIES TENDS TO UNDERCUT ANY DANGER OF DIRECT ACTION AGAINST OUR OFFICES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MILITANT STUDENT GROUPS AND THE "HALIFAX PEACE COALITION" INTEND TO ORGANIZE PROTESTS EVERY SATURDAY AFTERNOON IN FRONT OF THE OFFICE BUILDING HOUSING THE CONGEN.

9. (SBU) WE ARE COORDINATING CLOSELY WITH THE RCMP, THE HALIFAX REGIONAL POLICE, AND OUR OWN BUILDING SECURITY PEOPLE TO MINIMIZE ANY RISK. PSO HAS REVIEWED PROCEDURES WITH THE LOCAL CONTRACT GUARD TO CONTROL ACCESS TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE

CONSULATEQS OFFICE SPACE. NO PROTESTERS HAVE TARGETED THE CG  
RESIDENCE AS OF YET, BUT RCMP CONTACTS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE  
LOCATION OF THE RESIDENCE IS KNOWN TO LOCAL ANTI-WAR ACTIVISTS.  
KASHKETT